AIN'T I A WOMAN?

AIAW colletive iowa city, ia.

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In this issue we have printed two rather lengthy articles, "The Tyranny of Structurelessness" and "Anti Mass," because we think together they represent well the issue of, and debate over, organizational structure or the form of political activity or anarchy vs. some sort of central organization, central party, etc. Recently we have printed, or read in other publications, articles on organizational structure and in issue of the Furies appeared two articles which spelled the issue out in terms of anarchy vs. centralism, which is a context in which to put the issue that we think is really helpful.

"The Tyranny of Structurelessness" deals with problems and situations existing in the womans movement. We feel it is really perceptive and helpful. The solutions called for to those problems make the article diametrically opposed to the thought in "Anti Mass." We really dig Anti Mass. Its thought probably best describes how we have worked or tried to work and how we think people should be working. Our practice has always been pretty anarchistic but most of us have had an extremely negative reaction to the word anarchy, ascribing to it lack of discipline, not having to work with or be considerate of other people, being un collective, doing your own thing. These reactions are becoming understandable to us recently but have proved to be wrong. Lots of anarchists had these attitudes (most were aristocrats), lots didn't have them at all.

It is becoming apparent to us that anarchy is a form. Its content may be good or not so good. But we believe that form can determine to a great extent content, and a form consisting of voluntary activity between collectives offers the best social relations, freshest idea and activities, and the best chance of avoiding hierarchies (structured or informal) and reaching equality. It's still difficult for us to think of anarchy in terms of what a society will be like after a revolution but by thinking about forms in terms of our own lives--our present, we are freed from the mindset of having to have a blueprint for years from now and can also learn and progress from the material condition we exist within right now.

TO ASSEMBLE THE PAMPHLET ANTI-MASS: CUT OUT ALL THE PAGES ON THE SOLID BLACK LINES. THESE WILL ACTUALLY BE TWO PAGES, TO BE FOLDED IN THE MIDDLE AT THE FINAL STEP. PILE ONE PAGE ON TOP OF THE OTHER, FOLLOWING THE NUMBERED PAGES (FOR EXAMPLE, 4 AND 53 ON TOP OF 2 AND 55, ETC.) PAGES 28 AND 29 WILL BE AT THE TOP OF THE PILE; THE FRONT AND BACK COVERS WILL BE AT THE BOTTOM. FOLD IN HALF. STAPLE.

About being a Waitress

I'm a waitress and I just got back from work and I want to write some stuff about being a waitress.

The situation of the job is total subservience. The old oppressive idea -"Woman, put the meal on the table." In a rational, non-exploitive (post-revolutionary,) society I hope no such servile jobs exist. But today they do.

I think, of course, that restaurant owners should be forced to pay decent, living wages to all employees, and waitresses shouldn't have to rely on tip money to survive. I get paid $1.00 an hour, and that is even more than a lot of other waitresses make.

The realities of tipping are hard to deal with in terms of class. The people who can afford to leave the biggest tips are generally the ritzy-looking ones. So, when I'm working for that tip money to live on, I like to see ritzy people walking into the restaurant. That's disgusting, I should be happier to wait on a welfare mother who's getting out of the kitchen for a change. I love waiting on women like that, but at the same time don't expect her or want her to leave a tip. So, my survival needs and my politics conflict.

Like, I have to be nice, smiley, subservient, and run my butt off for pigs I'd just as soon shoot in the head - just for a lousy tip.

Tipping works to the advantage of the pig restaurant owner who's already ripping workers off by paying such low wages. This work-incentive idea: the more subservient the waitress, the bigger the tip she might get; what BULLSHIT. That's all to the owner's advantage to "please the customers."

Then there are people who come in for "private parties." The waitresses should be able to charge at least a 15% service charge. But often the boss says, "Only charge 10%," sometimes even nothing. This means the total bill for the party is lower, and the customer is likely to come back. The food prices are never cut, but the waitress's pay is. She's only making $1.00 an hour Most people never think of not paying the full food charge- but never consider paying the full service charge.

Customers say obnoxious, offensive and oppressive things and I'm in a position of not being able to say anything. Time after time I've had to crush the hell out of my anger so as not to lose my job.

I also think of the privilege of having a job at all. Particularly the aspect of being physically acceptable to of what is physically acceptable to the people that have power in this society. I don't look like a dyke, I'm not "overweight" and I'm white. I'm sure there are other privileges I'm overlooking.

I also wanted to write some things you can do to help waitresses. I used to go out to dinner, figure out how much money I had, spend that much on food, and if there was any change leftover, I'd leave it for the waitress. I suggest you consciously think of tip money before you even go out to eat.

In the restaurant, sit at a table that is already clean. Just be patient and courteous, and THINK before you say anything to the waitress. Like, get your order together. If you're not ready to order, it's better to ask her to come back, than waste her time making her stand around while you're stuttering over the menu for two minutes. Be aware of what else the waitress is doing, how busy she is and how much behind-the-counter, (or whatever,) work she does before she walks out with your food. Be organized. If you want anything, ask all at once if possible. Each trip to your table with any bullshit thing is wasted energy if one person asks a waitress, don't trust him. Leave really easier if one person asks and is supposed to give your tip to it on the table or hand it directly round the table whatever everyone needs the waitress. My boss has been before the waitress gets there to known to slip a few tips into his pocket.

"check back." That person can just run it down to the waitress instead of five people getting the waitress confused.

Remember you've got hands. You can help by taking things, setting them down and clearing spaces on the table yourself. I've waited on so many people who may as well be sitting on their hands. It just makes me feel more exploited.

Before you "flag the waitress down," THINK ON IT A LOT. Is it gonna kill you to wait a few minutes? Putting your comforts above the waitress's convenience is usually wrong. Employers don't like to see their customers (when they're trying to please,) be inconvenienced. The boss will take out your impatience on the waitress and hassle her about not working hard enough- not satisfying "her" (actually HIS,) customers.

Notice how the tip/pay system of the restaurant works. Some people include the tip when they pay their bill. If the restaurant owner or the like is standing at the cash register and is supposed to give your tip to the waitress, don't trust him. Leave it on the table or hand it directly to the waitress. My boss has been known to slip a few tips into his pocket.

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the tyranny of structurelessness

BY JOREEN

During the years in which the women's liberation movement has been taking shape a great emphasis has been placed on what are called leaderless, structureless groups as the main-if not sole-organizational form of the movement. The source of this idea was a natural reaction against the over-structured society in which most of us found ourselves, the inevitable control this gave others over our lives, and the continual elitism of the Left and similar groups among those who were supposedly fighting this overstructuredness.

The idea of structurelessness, however, has moved from a healthy counter to these tendencies to becoming a goddess in its own right. The idea is as little examined as the term is much used, but it has become an intrinsic and unquestioned part of women's liberation ideology. For the early development of the movement this did not much matter. It early defined its main goal, and its main method, as consciousness-raising, and the "structureless" rap group was an excellent means to this end. The looseness and informality of it encouraged participation in discussion and its often supportive atmosphere elicited personal insight. If nothing more concrete than personal insight ever resulted from these groups, that did not much matter, because their purpose did not really extend beyond this.

The basic problems didn't appear until individual rap groups exhausted the virtues of consciousness-raising and decided they wanted to do something more specific. At this point they usually floundered because most groups were unwilling to change their structure when they changed their tasks. Women had thoroughly accepted the idea of "structurelessness" without realizing the limitations of its uses. People would try to use the "structureless" group and the informal conference for purposes for which they were unsuitable out of a blind belief that no other means could possibly be anything but oppressive.

If the movement is to move beyond these elementary stages of development, it will have to disabuse itself of some of its prejudices about organization and structure. There is nothing inherently bad about either of these. They can and often are misused, but to reject them out of hand because they are misused is to deny ourselves the necessary tools to further development. We need to understand why "structurelessness" does not work.

Formal & Informal Structures

Contrary to what we would like to believe, there is no such thing as a structureless group. Any group of people of whatever nature that comes together for any length of time for any purpose will inevitably structure itself in some fashion. The structure may be flexible; it may vary over time; it may evenly or unevenly distribute tasks, power, and resources over the members of the group. But it will be formed regardless of the abilities, personalities, or intentions of the people involved. The very fact that we are individuals with different talents, predispositions, and backgrounds makes this inevitable. Only if we refused to relate or interact on any basis whatsoever could we approximate structurelessness and that is not the nature of a human group.

This means that to strive for a structureless group is as useful, and as deceptive, as to aim at an "objective" news story, "value-free" social science, or a "free" economy. A "laissez faire" group is about as realistic as a "laissez faire" society; the idea becomes a smoke screen for the strong or the lucky to establish unquestioned hegemony over others. This hegemony can be so easily established because the idea of "structurelessness" does not prevent the formation of informal structures, only formal ones. Similarly "laissez faire" philosophy did not prevent the economically powerful from establishing control over wages, prices, and distribution of goods; it only prevented the government from doing so. Thus structurelessness becomes a way of masking power, and within the women's movement is usually most strongly advocated by those who are the most powerful (whether they are conscious of their power or not). As long as the structure of the group is informal, the rules of how decisions are made are known only to a few and awareness of power is curtailed to those who know the rules. Those who do not know the rules and are not chosen for initiation must remain in confusion, or suffer from paranoid delusions that something is happening of which they are not quite aware.

For everyone to have the opportunity to be involved in a given group and to participate in its activities the structure must be explicit, not implicit. The rules of decision-making must be open and available to everyone, and this can happen only if they are formalized. This is not to say that formalization of a structure of a group will destroy the informal structure. It usually doesn't. But it does hinder the informal structure from having predominant control and make available some means of attacking it if the people involved are not at least responsible to the needs of the group at large. "Structurelessness" is organizationally impossible. We cannot decide whether to have a structured or structureless group; only whether or not to have a formally structured one. Therefore the word will not be used any longer except to refer to the idea it represents. *Unstructured* will refer to those groups which have not been deliberately structured in a particular manner. *Structured* will refer to those which have. A Structured group always has a *formal* structure, and may also have an informal one. An Unstructured group always has an informal, or covert, structure. It is this informal structure, particularly in Unstructured groups, which forms the basis for elites.

The Nature of Elitism

"Elitist" is probably the most abused word in the women's liberation movement. It is used as frequently, and for the same reasons, as "pinko" was used in the fifties. It is never used correctly. Within the movement it commonly refers to individuals, though the personal characteristics and activities of those to whom it is directed may differ widely. An individual, *as an individual*, can never be an elitist, because the only proper application of the term "elite" is to groups. Any individual, regardless of how well known that person may be, can never be an elite.

Correctly, an elite refers to a small group of people who have power over a larger group of which they are part, usually without direct responsibility to that larger group, and often without their knowledge or consent. A person becomes an elitist by being part of, or advocating the rule by, such a small group, whether or not that individual is well known or not known at all. Notoriety is not a definition of an elitist. The most insidious elites are usually run by people not known to the larger public at all. Intelligent elitists are usually smart enough not to allow themselves to become well known; when they become known, they are watched, and the mask over their power is no longer firmly lodged.

Because elites are informal does not mean they are invisible. At any small group meeting anyone with a sharp eye and an acute ear can tell who is influencing whom. The members of a friendship group will relate more to each other than to other people. They listen more attentively, and interrupt less. They repeat each other's points and give in amiably. The "outs" they tend to ignore or grapple with. The "outs" approval is not necessary for making a decision, but it is necessary for the "outs" to stay on good terms with the "ins". Of course the lines are not as sharp as I have drawn them. They are nuances of interaction, not prewritten scripts. But they are discernible, and they do have their effect. Once one knows with whom it is important to check before a decision is made, and whose approval is the stamp of acceptance, one knows who is running things.

Elites are not conspiracies. Very seldom does a small group of people get together and deliberately try to take over a larger group for its own ends. Elites are nothing more, and nothing less, than groups of friends who also happen to participate in the same political activities. They would probably maintain their friendship whether or not they were involved in political activities; they would probably be involved in political activities whether or not they maintained their friendships. It is the coincidence of these two phenomena which creates elites in any groups and makes them so difficult to break.

These friendship groups function as networks of communication outside any regular channels for such communication that may have been set up by a group. If no channels are set up, they function as the only networks of communication. Because people are friends, because they usually share the same values and orientations, because they talk to each other socially and consult with each other when common decisions have to be made, the people involved in these networks have more power in the group than those who don't. And it is a rare group that does not establish some informal networks of communication through the friends that are made in it.

Some groups, depending on their size, may have more than one such informal communications network. Networks may even overlap. When only one such network exists, it is the elite of an otherwise Unstructured group, whether the participants in it want to be elitists or not. If it is the only such network in a Structured group it may or may not be an elite depending on its composition and the nature of the formal Structure. If there are two or more such networks of friends; they may compete for power within the group, thus forming factions, or one may deliberately opt out of the competition, leaving the other as the elite. In a Structured group, two or more such friendship networks usually compete with each other for formal power. This if often the healthiest situation as the other members are in a position to arbitrate between the two competitors for power and thus to make demands on whichever they give their temporary allegiance to.

The inevitably elitist and exclusive nature of informal communication networks of friends is neither a new phenomenon characteristic of the women's movement nor a phenomenon new to women. Such informal relationships have excluded women for centuries from participating in integrated groups of which they were a part. In any profession or organization these networks have created the "locker room" mentality and the "old school" ties which have effectively prevented women as a group (as well as some men individually) from having equal access to the sources of power or social reward. Much of the energy of past women's movements has been directed to having the structures of decision-making and the selection processes *formalized* so that the exclusion of

women could be confronted directly. As we well know, these efforts have not prevented the informal male-only networks from discriminating against women, but they have made it more difficult.

Since movement groups have made no concrete decisions about who shall exercise power within them, many different criteria are used around the country. Most criteria are along the lines of traditional female characteristics. For instance, in the early days of the movement, marriage was usually a prerequisite for participation in the informal elite. As women have been traditionally taught, married women relate primarily to each other, and look upon single women as being too threatening to have as close friends. In many cities, this criterion was further refined to include only those women married to New Left men. This standard had more than tradition behind it, however, because New Left men often had access to resources needed by the movement--such as mailing lists, printing presses, contacts and information--and women were used to getting what they needed through men rather than independently. As the movement has changed through time, marriage has become a less universal criterion for effective participation, but all informal elites establish standards by which only women who possess certain material or personal characteristics may join. They frequently include: middle-class background (despite all the rhetoric about relating to the working class); being married; not being married but living with someone; being or pretending to be a lesbian; being between the age of twenty and thirty; being college educated or at least having some college background; being "hip"; not being too "hip"; holding a certain political line or identification as a "radical"; having children or at least liking them; not having children; having certain "feminine" personality characteristics such as being "nice"; dressing right (whether in the traditional style or the anti-traditional style); etc. There are also some characteristics which will almost always tag one as a "deviant" who should not be related to. They include: being too old; working full time, particularly if one is actively committed to a "career"; not being "nice"; and being avowedly single (i.e., neither actively heterosexual nor homosexual).

Other criteria could be included, but they all have common themes. The characteristics prerequisite for participating in the informal elites of the movement, and thus for exercising power, concern one's background, personality, or allocation of time. They do not include one's competence, dedication to feminism, talents, or potential contribution to the movement. The former are the criteria one usually uses in determining one's friends. The latter are what any movement or organization has to use if it is going to be politically effective.

The criteria of participation may differ from group to group, but the means of becoming a member of the informal elite if one meets those criteria are pretty much the same. The only main difference depends on whether one is in a group from the beginning, or joins it after it has begun. If involved from the beginning it is important to have as many of one's personal friends as possible also join. If no one knows anyone else very well, then one must deliberately form friendships with a select number and establish the informal interaction patterns crucial to the creation of an informal structure. Once the informal patterns are formed they act to maintain themselves, and one of the most successful tactics of maintenance is to continuously recruit new people who "fit in." One joins such an elite much the same way one pledges a sorority. If perceived as a potential addition, one is "rushed" by members of the informal structure and eventually either dropped or initiated. If the soroity is not politically aware enough to actively engage in this process itself it can be started by the outsider pretty much the same way one joins any private club. Find a sponsor, i.e., pick some member of the elite who appears to be well respected within it and actively cultivate that person's friendship. Eventually, he will most likely bring you into the inner circle.

All of these procedures take time. So if one works full time or has a similar major commitment, it is usually impossible to join simply because there are not enough hours left to go to all the meetings and cultivate the personal relationships necessary to have a voice in the decision-making. That is why formal structures of decision-making are a boon to the overworked person. Having an established process for decision-making ensures that everyone can participate in it to some extent.

Although this dessection of the process of elite formation within small groups has been critical in perspective, it is not made in the belief that these informal structures are inevitably bad-merely inevitable. All groups create informal structures as a result of the interaction patterns among the members of the group. Such informal structures can do very useful things. But only Unstructured groups are totally governed by them. When informal elites are combined with a myth of "structurelessness," there can be no attempt to put limits on the use of power. It becomes capricious.

This has two potentially negative consequences of which we should be aware. The first is that the informal structure of decision-making will be much like a sorority-one in which people listen to others because they like them and not because they say significant things. As long as the movement does not do significant things this does not much matter. But if its development is not to be arrested at this preliminary stage, it will have to alter this trend. The second is that informal structures have no obligation to be responsible to the group at large. Their power was not given to them; it cannot be taken away. Their influence is not based on what they do for the group, therefore they cannot be directly influenced by the group. This does not necessarily make informal structures irresponsible. Those who are concerned with maintaining their influence will usually try to be responsible. The group simply cannot compel such responsibility; it is dependent on the interests of the elite.

The "Star" System

The idea of "structurelessness" has created the "star" system. We live in a society which expects political groups to make decisions and to select people to articulate those decisions to the public at large. The press and the public do not know how to listen seriously to individual women as women they want to know how the group feels. Only three techniques have ever been developed for establishing mass group opinion: the vote or referendum, the public opinion survey questionnaire, and the selection of group spokespeople at an appropriate meeting. The women's liberation movement has used none of these to communicate with the public. Neither the movement as a whole nor most of the multitudinous groups within it have established a means of explaining their position on various issues. But the public is conditioned to look for spokespeople.

While it has consciously not chosen spokespeople, the movement has thrown up many women who have caught the public eye for varying reasons. These women represent no particular group or established opinion; they know this and usually say so. But because there are no official spokespeople nor any decision-making body the press can query when it wants to know the movement's position on a subject, these women are perceived as the spokespeople. Thus whether they want to or not, whether the movement likes it or not, women of public note are put in the role of spokespeople by default.

This is one main source of the ire that is often felt toward the women who arelabeled "stars." Because they were not selected by the women in the movement to represent the movement's views, they are resented when the press presumes that they speak for the movement. But as long as the movement does not select its own spokeswomen, such women will be placed in that role by the press and the public, regardless of their own desires.

This has several negative consequences for both the movement and the women labeled "stars." (1) Because the movement didn't put them in the role of spokesperson, the movement cannot remove them. The press put them there and only the press can choose not to listen. The press will continue to look to "stars" as spokeswomen as long as it has no official alternatives to go to for authoritative statements from the movement. The movement has no control in the selection of its representatives to the public as long as it believes that it should have no representatives at all. (2) Women put in this position often find themselves viciously attacked by their sisters. This achieves nothing for the movement and is painfully destructive of the individuals involved. Such attacks only result in either the woman leaving the movement entirely-often bitterly alienated- or in her ceasing to feel responsible to her "sisters." She may maintain some loyalty to the movement, vaguely defined, but she is no longer susceptible to pressures from other women it it. One cannot feel responsible to people who have been the source of such pain without being a masochist, and these women are usually too strong to bow to that kind of personal pressure. Thus the backlash to the "star" system in effect encourages the very kind of individualistic non-responsibility that the movement condemns. By purging a sister as a "star," the movement loses whatever control it may have had over the person, who then becomes free to commit all of the individualistic sins of which she has been accused.

Political Impotence

Unstructured groups may be very effective in getting women to talk about their lives; they aren't very good for getting things done. It is when people get tired of "just talking" and want to do something more that the groups, unless they change the nature of their operation, flounder. Because the larger movement in most cities is as Unstructured as individual rap groups, it is not too much more effective than the separate groups at specific tasks. The informal structure is rarely together enough or in touch enough with the people to be able to operate effectively. So the movement generates much motion and few results. Unfortunately, the consequences of all this motion are not as innocuous as the results, and their victim is the movement itself.

Some groups have turned themselves into local action projects if they do not involve many people and work in a small scale. But this form restricts movement activity to the local level; it cannot be done on the regional or national. Also, to function well the groups must usually pare themselves down to that informal group of friends who were running things in the first place. This excludes many women from participating. As long as the only way women can participate in the movement is through membership in a small group, the non-gregarious are at a distinct disadvantage. As long as friendship groups are the main means of organizational activity, elitism becomes institutionalized.

For those groups which cannot find a local project to which to devote themselves, the mere act of staying together becomes the reason for their staying together. When a group has no specific task (and consciousness-raising is a task), the people in it turn their energies to controlling others in the group. This is not done so much out of a malicious desire to manipulate others (though sometimes it is) as out of a lack of anything better to do with their talents. Able people with time on their hands and a need to justify their coming together put their efforts into personal control, and spend their time criticizing the personalities of the other members in the group. Infighting and personal power games rule the day. When a group is involved in a task, people learn to get along with others as they are and to subsume personal dislikes for the sade of the larger goal. There are limits placed on the compulsion to remold every person in our image of what they should be.

The end of consciousness-raising leaves people with no place to go and the lack of structure leaves them with no way of getting there. The women in the movement either turn in on themselves and their sisters or seek other alternatives of action. There are few that are available. Some women just "do their own thing." This can lead to great deal of individual creativity, much of which is useful for the movement, but it is not a viable alternative for most women and certainly does not foster a spirit of cooperative group effort. Other women drift out of the movement entirely because they don't want to develop an individual project and they have found no way of discovering, joining, or starting group projects that interest them.

(cont. on Page 4)

The Tyranny of Structurelessness

cont. from p.3

Many turn to other political organizations to give them the kind of structured, effective activity that they have not been able to find in the women's movement. Those political organizations which see women's liberation as only one of many issues to which women should devote their time thus find the movement a vast recruiting ground for new members. There is no need for such organizations to "infiltrate" (though this is not precluded). The desire for meaningful political activity generated in women by their becoming part of the women's liberation movement is sufficient to make them eager to join other organizations when the movement itself provides no outlets for their new ideas and energies.

Those women who join other political organizations while remaining within the women's liberation movement, or who join women's liberation while remaining in other political organizations, in time become the framework for new informal structures. These friendship networks are based upon their common nonfeminist politics rather than the characteristics discussed earlier, but operate in much the same way. Because these women share common values, ideas, and political orientations, they too become informal, unplanned, unselected, unresponsible elites-whether they intend to be so or not.

These new informal elites are often perceived as threats by the old informal elites previously developed within different movement groups. This is a correct perception. Such politically oriented networks are rarely willing to be merely "sororities" as many of the old ones were, and want to proselytize their political as well as their feminist ideas. This is only natural, but its implications for women's liberation have never been adequately discussed. The old elites are rarely willing to bring such differences of opinion out into the open because it would involve exposing the nature of the informal structure of the group. Many of these informal elites have been hiding under the banner of "anti-elitism" and "structurelessness." To effectively counter the competition from another informal structure, they would have to become "public" and this possibility is fraught with many dangerous implications. Thus, to maintain its own power, it is easier to rationalize the exclusion of the members of the other informal structure by such means as "red-baiting," "reformist-baiting," "lesbian-baiting," or "straight-baiting." The only other alternative is to formally structure the group in such a way that the original power structure is institutionalized. This is not always possible. If the informal elites have been well structured and have exercised a fair amount of power in the past, such a task is feasible. These groups have a history of being somewhat politically effective in the past, as the tightness of the informal structure has proven an adequate substitute for a formal structure. Becoming Structured does not alter their operation much, though the institutionalization of the power structure does open it to formal challenge. It is those groups which are in greatest need of structure that are often least capable of creating it. Their informal structures have not been too well formed and adherence to the ideology of "structurelessness" makes them reluctant to change tactics. The more Unstructured a group is, the more lacking it is in informal structures, and the more it adheres to an ideology of "structurelessness," the more vulnerable it is to being taken over by a group of political comrades.

Since the movement at large is just as Unstructured as most of its constituent groups, it is similarly susceptible to indirect influence. But the phenomenon manifests itselfs differently. On a local level most groups can operate autonomously; but the only groups that can organize a national activity are nationally organized groups. Thus, it is often the Structured feminist organizations that provide national direction for feminist activities, and this direction is determined by the priorities of those organizations. Such groups as NOW, WEAL, and some Left women's caucuses are simply the only organizations capable of mounting a national campaign. The multitude of Unstructured women's liberation groups can choose to support or not support the national campaigns, but are incapable of mounting their own. Thus their members become the troops under the leadership of Structured organizations. The avowedly Unstructured groups have no way of drawing upon the movement's vast resources to support its priorities. It doesn't even have a way of deciding what they are.

The more Unstructured a movement is, the less control it has over the directions in which it develops and the political actions in which it engages. This does not mean that its ideas do not spread. Given a certain amount of interest by the media and the appropriateness of social conditions, the ideas will still be diffused widely. But diffusion of ideas does not mean they are implemented; it only means they are talked about. Insofar as they can be applied individually they may be acted on; insofar as they require coordinated political power to be implemented, they will not be. As long as the women's liberation movement stays dedicated to a form of organization which stresses small, inactive discussion groups among friends, the worst problems of Unstructuredness will not be felt. But this style of organization has its limits; it is politically inefficacious, exclusive, and discriminatory against those women who are not or cannot be tied into the friendship networks. Those who do not fit into what already exists because of class, race, occupation, education, parental or marital status, personality, etc., will inevitably be discouraged from trying to participate. Those who do fit in will develop vested interests in maintaining things as they are.

The informal groups' vested interests will be sustained by the informal structures which exist, and the movement will have no way of determining who shall exercise power within it. If the movement continues to deliberately not select who shall exercise power, it does not thereby abolish power. All it does is abdicate the right to demand that those who do exercise power and influence by responsible for it. If the movement continues to keep power as diffuse as possible because it knows it cannot demand responsibility from those who have it, it does prevent any group or person from totally dominating. But it simultaneously insures that the movement is as ineffective as possible. Some middle ground between domination and ineffectiveness can and must be found.

These problems are coming to a head at this time because the nature of the movement is necessarily changing. Consciousness-raising as the main function of the women's liberation movement is becoming obsolete. Due to the intense press publicity of the last two years and the numerous overground books and articles now being circulated, women's liberation has become a household word. Its issues are discussed and informal rap groups are formed by people who have no explicit connection with any movement group. Purely educational work is no longer such an over-whelming need. The movement must to on to other tasks. It now needs to establish its priorities, articulate its goals, and pursue its objectives in a coordinated fashion. To do this it must get organized locally,regionally, and nationally.

Principles of Democratic Structuring

Once the movement no longer clings tenaciously to the ideology of "structurelessness," it is free to develop those forms of organization best suited to its healthy functioning. This does not mean that we should go to the other extreme and blindly imitate the traditional forms of organization. But neither should we blindly reject them all. Some of the traditional techniques will prove useful, albeit not perfect; some will give us insights into what we should and should not do to obtain certain ends with minimal costs to the individuals in the movement. Mostly, we will have to experiment with different kinds of structuring and develop a variety of techniques to use for different situations.The Lot System is one such idea which has emerged from the movement. It is not applicable to all situations, but is useful in some. Other ideas for structuring are needed. But before we can proceed to experiment intelligently, we must accept the idea that there is nothing inherently bad about structure itself--only its excess use.

While engaging in this trial-and-error process, there are some principles we can keep in mind that are essential to democratic structuring which are also politically effective:

1. *Delegation* of specific authority to specific individuals for specific tasks by democratic procedures. Letting people assume jobs or tasks by default only means they are not dependably done. If people are selected to do a task, preferably after expressing an interest or willingness to do it, they have made a commitment which cannot so easily be ignored.

2. Requiring all those to whom authority has been delegated to be *responsible* to those who selected them. This is how the group has control over people in positions of authority. Individuals may exercise power, but it is the group that has ultimate say over how the power is exercised.

3. *Distribution* of authority among as many people as is reasonably possible. This prevents monopoly of power and requires those in positions of authority to consult with many others in the process of exercising it. It also gives many people the opportunity to have responsibility for specific tasks and thereby to learn different skills.

4. *Rotation* of tasks among individuals. Responsibilities which are held too long by one person, formally or informally, come to be seen as that person's "property" and are not easily relinquished or controlled by the group. Conversely, if tasks are rotated too frequently the individual does not have time to learn her job well and acquire the sense of satisfaction of doing a good job.

5. *Allocation* of tasks along rational criteria. Selecting someone for a position because they are liked by the group or giving them hard work because they are disliked serves neither the group nor the person in the long run. Ability, interest, and responsibility have got to be the major concerns in such selection. People should be given an opportunity to learn skills they do not have, but this is best done through some sort of "apprenticeship" program rather than the "sink or swim" method. Having a responsibility one can't handle well is demoralizing. Conversely, being blacklisted from doing what one can do well does not encourage one to develop one's skills. Women have been punished for being competent throughout most of human history; the movement does not need to repeat this process.

6. *Diffusion of information* to everyone as frequently as possible. Information is power. Access to information enhances one's power. When an informal network spreads new ideas and information among themselves outside the group, they are already engaged in the process of forming an opinion-without the group participating. The more one knows about how things work and what is happening, the more politically effective one can be.

7. *Equal access to resources* needed by the group. This is not always perfectly possible, but should be striven for. A member who maintains a monopoly over a needed resource (like a printing press owned by a husband, or a darkroom) can unduly influence the use of that resource. Skills and information are also resources. Members' skills can be equitably available only when members are willing to teach what they know to others.

When these principles are applied, they insure that whatever structures are developed by different movement groups will be controlled by and responsible to the group. The group of people in positions of authority will be diffuse, flexible, open and temporary. They will not be in such an easy position to institutionalize their power because ultimate decisions will be made by the group at large. The group will have the power to determine who shall exercise authority within it.

2

1. the difference between mass and class
2. primacy of the collective
3. size of the collective
4. contact between collectives
5. priority of local action
6. the dream of unity
7. the function of analysis
8. the need for new formats
9. self-activity
10. struggle on many levels

the anti-mass

changing social relations. You must consciously create the contradictions in history.

Concretely, this means: organize yourselves, not somebody else. The collective is the organizational nucleus of a classless society. As a formal organization it negates all forms of hierarchy. The answer to alienation is to make yourself the *subject*, not the object, of history.

One of the crucial obstacles to the formation of collectives is the transitional period-when the collective must survive side by side with a disintegrating movement and a mass society. The disintegration of the movement is not an isolated phenomenon but reflects the weakening of the major institutions in American society responsible for our alienation. Many people are demoralized by this process and find it bewildering because they actually depend subconsciously on the continued existence of these institutions. We are witnessing the break-up and transformation of an institution integral to modern society-the mass market. The mass market is a corporate structure which few people are sufficiently aware of to realize how it affects our political life. We really do depend on our "leaders," whether they

An underground strategy puts the impulse of confrontation into perspective. We must fight against the planned obsolescence of confrontations which lock us into the time-span of instant revolution. Going underground means having a long range strategy-something which plans for 1985. The iceberg strategy keeps us cool. It trains us to control our reflexes and to calculate our responses.

The underground strategy is also necessary to maintain autonomy. Autonomy preserves the organizational form of the collective which is critical to the sharpening of its politics. Nothing will be achieved by submerging ourselves in a chaos of revolutionary fronts. The principal strategy of the counterfeit Left will be to smear over the differences with appeals to a class unity that no longer exists. An underground strategy without a revolutionary form of organization can only emerge as a new class society. To destroy the system of oppression is not enough. We must create the organization of a free society. When the underground emerges, the collectives will be that society.

1

Under these circumstances it takes great effort to imagine new forms of existence. Space must be created before we can think of these things and be able to establish the legitimacy of acting upon them.

The form of a collective is its practice. The collective is opposed to the mass. It contradicts the structure of the mass. The collective is anti-mass.

the form of a collective is its practice

its position is that it forces us to acknowledge our own weaknesses-even before we engage in struggle against it. The worst mistake is to pretend the enemy does not exist.

Urban struggle requires a subversive strategy. Concretely, working "within the system" should become for us a source of money, information and anonymity. This is what Mao means when he says, "Move at night." The routine of daily life is nighttime for the enemy-when they cannot see us. The process of cooptation should become an increasingly disquieting exercise for them.

Exploiting splits within the enemy camp does not mean helping one segment defeat another. The basic aim is to maintain the splits. There are significant differences among the oppressors. These have the effect of weakening them. Under certain circumstances these splits may provide a margin of manueverability which may be strategic for us. The main thing is not to view the enemy monolithically. Monolithic thinking condemns you to one way of acting.

There is a tendency to see the most degenerate forms of reaction as the primary enemy. The corporations are consciously pandering to such ideas through films like *Easy Rider* which also attempts

What is the mass? Most people think of the mass in terms of numbers-like a crowded street or a football stadium. But it is actually *structure* which determines its character. The mass is an aggregate of couples who are separate, detached and anonymous. They live in cities, physically close yet socially apart. Their lives are privatized and depraved. Coca-Cola and loneliness. The social existence of the mass-its rules and regulations, the structuring of its status roles and leadership-are organized through consumption (the mass market). They are all products of a specific social organization. Ours.

Of course, no one sees themselves as part of the mass. It's always *others* who are the masses. The trouble is that it's not only the corporations which organize us into the mass. The "movement" itself behaves as a mass and its organizers reproduce the hierarchy of the mass.

Really, how do you fight fire? With water, of course. The same goes for revolution. We don't fight the mass (market) with a mass (movement). We fight mass with class. Our aim should not be to create a mass movement but a class force.

To assemble the pamphlet ANTI-MASS: cut out all the pages on the solid black lines. These will actually be two pages, to be folded in the

most pamphlets deal with content & issues. this one is about methods & organization. don't read it and ask yourself "what are they talking about?" as far as we're concerned the means justify the means.

neutralize activate destroy

P.O. Box 31352
San Francisco, Calif. 94131
Published by The Anti-Mass

primacy of the collective

The small group is the coming together of people who feel the need for collectivity. Its function is often to break out of the mass-specifically from the isolation of daily life and the mass structure of the movement. The problem is that frequently the group cannot create an independent existence and an identity of its own because it continues to define itself negatively, i.e. in opposition. So long as its point of reference lies outside of it, the group's politics tend to be superimposed on it by events and crises.

The small group can be a stage in the development of the collective, if it develops a critique of the frustrations stemming from its external orientation. The formation of a collective begins when people not only have the same politics but agree on the method of struggle.

Why should the collective be the primary form of organization? The collective is an alternative to the existing structure of society. Changing social relations is a *process* rather than a product of revolution. In other words, you make the revolution by actually

the difference between mass and class

Why is it important to know the difference between mass and class? The chances are there can be no conscious revolutionary practice without making this distinction. We are not playing around with words. Look. We are all living in a mass society. We didn't get that way by accident. The mass is a specific form of social organization. The reason is clear. Consumption is organized by the corporations. Their products define the mass. The mass is not a cliche-the "masses"-but a routine which dominates your daily life. Understanding the structure of the mass market is the first step toward understanding what happened to the class struggle.

What is a class? A class is a consciously organized social force. For example, the ruling class is conscious and acts collectively to organize not only itself but also the people (mass) that it rules. The corporation is the self-conscious collective power of the ruling class. We are not saying that class relations do not exist in the rest of society. But they remain passive so long as they are shaped simply by objective conditions (i.e. work situations). What is necessary is the active (subjective) participation of the class itself. Class prejudice is not class consciousness. The class is conscious of its social existence because it seeks to organize *itself*. The mass is unconscious of its social existence because it is organized by Coca-Cola and IBM.

The moral of the story is: the mass is a mass because it is organized as a mass. Don't be fooled by the brand name. Mass is thinking with your ass.

to identify with young males. The function of analysis is to break down and specify the different forces within the enemy camp.

The spaces created by these splits are of crucial importance to the preparation of a long range strategy. It will be increasingly difficult to survive with the visibility that we are accustomed to. The lifestyles which declare our opposition are also the ones which make us easy targets. We must not mistake the level of appearances for new cultures. The whole point is not to make a fetish of our lifestyles. In the psychedelic atmosphere of repression, square is cool.

Always keep part of your strategy underground. Just as analysis helps to differentiate the enemy so it should provide you with different levels of attack. Mao says: "Flexibility is a concrete expression of initiative."

Going underground should not mean dropping heroically out of sight. There will be few places to hide in the electronic environment of the future. The most dangerous kind of underground will be one that is like an iceberg. The roles created to replace our identities in everyday life must become the disguise of the underground.

There are at least three ways of dealing with a situation. You can neutralize, activate or destroy. Neutralize is to create space. Activate is to gain support. Destroy is to win. What's more, it is essential to learn how to use all three simultaneously.

Struggle on many levels begins with the activation of *all* the senses. We must be able to conceive of more than one mode of acting for a given situation. The response, i.e. method of struggle, should contain three elements: 1)a means of survival; 2)a method of exploiting splits within the enemy camp; 3)an underground strategy.

The fundamental tendency of corporate liberalism is to identify with social change while trying to contain it. Wouldn't it be ironic (and even a relief) if we could turn the threat of cooptation into a means of survival?

The fear of cooptation often leads people to shun the challenge of the corporate liberals. Some of the purist revolutionaries prefer not to think about using the coopter for their own purposes. Too often the mentality of the "job" obscures the potential for subversion.

The essence of corporate liberalism demands that we not be sloppy in our own thinking and response. The strength of

be the Chicago 7 or 7 Up. Our understanding of the collective form of organization is based on a critique of the mass and the dictatorship of the product.

These conditions make it imperative that any people who decide to create a collective know exactly who they are and what they are doing. That is why you must consider your collective as primary. Because, if you don't believe in the legitimacy of this form of organization, you can't have a *practical* analysis of what is happening. Don't kid yourself. The struggle for the creation and survival of collectives at this moment of history is going to be very difficult.

The dominant issue will be how collectives can become a part of history-how they can become a social force. There is no guarantee and we should promise no easy victories. The uniqueness of developing collectives is their definitive break with all hierarchic forms of organization and the reconstructing of a classless society.

The thinking of radical organizers is frozen in the concept of a mass movement. This form of struggle, no matter how radical its demands, never threatens the basic structure-the mass itself.

middle at the final step. Pile one page on top of the other, following the numbered pages (for example, 4 and 53 on top of 2 and 55, etc.) pages 28

The strength of a collective lies in its social organization, not its numbers. Once you think in terms of recruiting, you might as well join the Army. The difference between expansion and reproduction is the difference between adding and multiplying. The first bases its strength on numbers and the second on relationships between people.

Why should there be a limit to size? Because we are neither supermen nor slaves. Beyond a certain point, the group becomes a meeting and before you know it you have to raise your hand to speak. The collective is a recognition of the practical limits of conversation. This simple fact is the basis for a new social experience.

Relations of inequality can be seen more clearly within a collective and dealt with more effectively. "Whatever the nature of authority in the large organization, it is inherent in the simple organization unit."* A small group with a "leader" is the nucleus of a class society. Small size restricts the area which any single individual can dominate. This is true both internally and in relation to other groups.

*Chester Barnard, *The Function of Executives*, 1938.

self-activity

Bad work habits and sloppy behavior undermine any attempt to construct collectivity. Casual, sloppy behavior means that we don't care deeply about what we are doing or who we are doing it with. This may come as a surprise to a lot of people. The fact remains: we talk revolution but act revolutionary at elementary levels.

There are two basic things underlying these unfortunate circumstances: 1) people's idea of how something (like revolution) will happen shapes their work habits; 2) their class background gives them a casual view of politics.

There is no doubt that the Pepsi generation is more politically alive. But this new energy is being channelled by organizers into boring meetings which reproduce the hierarchy of class society. After awhile, critical thinking is eroded and people lose their curiosity. Meetings become a routine like everything else in life.

A lot of problems which collectives will have can be traced to the work habits acquired in the (mass) movement.

social relation. What is important to see is that work is the creating of conscious activity within the structure of the collective.

One of the best ways to discover and correct anti-work attitudes is through self-criticism. This provides an objective framework which allows people the space to be criticized and to be critical. Self-criticism is the opposite of self-consciousness because its aim is not to isolate you but to free repressed abilities. Self-criticism is a method for dealing with piggish behavior and developing consciousness.

To root out the society within us and to redefine our work relations a collective must develop a sense of its own history.* One of the hardest things to do is to see the closest relations-those within the collective-in political terms. The tendency is to be sloppy, or what Mao calls "liberal," about relations between friends. Rules can no

*One of the first groups to stress this point is *The Feminists*. We highly recommend their writings, especially "Organizational Principles and Structures," available for 20¢ from *The Feminists*, 120 Liberty St., New York, N.Y.

to the question above.

Of course, people will put down the collective as being exclusive. That is not the point. The size of a collective is essentially a limitation on its authority. By contrast, large organizations, while having open membership, are *exclusive* in terms of who shapes the politics and actively participates in the structuring of activities. The choice is between joining the mass or creating the class. The revolutionary project is to do it yourself. Remember. Alexandra Kollontai warned in 1920, "The essence of bureaucracy is when some third person decides your fate."

why not advertize a question rather than the answer ?

late, getting bored at difficult moments, etc., are all signs of a *political* attitude which is destructive to the collective. The important thing is recognizing the existence of these problems and knowing what causes them. They are not personal problems but historically determined attitudes.

Many people confuse the revolt against alienated labor in its specific historical form with work activity itself. This revolt is expressed in an anti-work attitude.

Attitudes toward work are shaped by our relations to production, i.e. class. Class is a product of hierarchic divisions of labor (including forms other than wage labor). There are three basic relations which can produce anti-work attitudes. The working class expresses its anti-work attitude as a rebellion against routinized labor. For the middle class, the anti-work attitude comes out of the ideology of consumer society and revolves around leisure. The stereotype of the "lazy native" or "physically weak woman" is a third anti-work attitude which is applied to those who are excluded from wage labor.

The dream of automation (i.e. no work) reinforces class prejudice. The middle class is the one that has the dream since it seeks to expand its lei-

contact between collectives

The collective does not communicate with the mass. It makes contact with other collectives. What if other collectives do not exist? Well, then it should talk to itself until they do. Yes. By all means, the collective also communicates with other people, but it never views them as a mass-as a constituency or audience. The collective communicates with *individuals* in order to encourage self-organization. It assumes that people are capable of self-organization and given that alternative they will choose it over mass participation. The collective knows that it takes time to create new forms of organization. It simply seeks to hasten the crumbling of the mass.

Much of the problem of "communication" these days is that people think they have got to communicate all the time.

toe-dipping approach that seems so common these days. Of course, there are groups who say don't use it at all and they don't. They will probably outlast Jerry since the basic technique of mass media is overexposure. That is why Jerry has already written his memoirs. The Situationists say: "The revolt is contained by overexposure. We are given it to contemplate so that we shall forget to participate."

We are not talking about the packaging of politics. *Ramparts* is the *Playboy* of the Left. On the other hand, the underground press is pornographic and redundant. Newsreel's projector is running backwards. And why in the era of *Cosmopolitan* magazine must we suffer the stodginess of a *Leviathan*? We much prefer reading *Fortune*-the magazine for "the men in charge of change"- for our analysis of capitalism.

There is no getting around it-we need new formats. Otherwise we will never sharpen our wits. To break out of the spell of print requires a conscious effort to think a new language. We should no longer be immobilized by other people's words. Don't wait for the news to tell you what's happening. Make your own

pages 28 and 29 will be at the top of the pile; the front and back covers will be at the bottom. Fold in half. Staple.

People perpetuate the passive roles they have become accustomed to in large meetings. The emphasis on mass participation means that all you have to do is show up. Rarely do people prepare themselves for a meeting, nor do they feel the need to. Often this situation does not become evident precisely because the few people who do work (those who run the meeting) create the illusion of group achievement.

Because people see themselves essentially as objects and not as subjects, political activity is defined as an event outside them and in the future. No one sees *themselves* making the revolution and, therefore, they don't understand how it will be accomplished.

The short span of attention is one telltale symptom of instant politics. The emphasis on responding to crisis seems to contract the span of attention-in fact there is often no time dimension at all. This timelessness is experienced as the syncopation of overcommittment. Many people say they will do things without really thinking out carefully whether they have the time to do them. Having time ultimately means defining what you really want to do. Over-committment is when you want to do everything but end up doing nothing.

The numerous other symptoms of casual politics-lack of preparation, being

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size of the collective

The aim of any organization is to make it as simple as possible, or as McLuhan puts it, "high in participation, low in definition." The tendency is just the opposite. Our reflex is to create administrative structures to deal with political problems.

Most people cannot discuss intelligently the subject of size. There is an unspoken feeling either that the problem should not exist or that it is beneath us to talk about it. Let's get it out in the open. Size is a question of politics and social relations, not administration. Do you wonder why the subject is shunted aside at larger meetings? Because it fundamentally challenges the repressive nature of large organizations. Small groups that function as appendages to larger bodies will never really *feel* like small groups.

The collective should not be bigger than a band-no orchestras or chamber music please. The basic idea is to reproduce the collective, not expand it.

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struggle on many levels

Struggle has many faces. But no two faces look alike. Like the cubists, we must look at things from many sides. The problem is to find ways of creating space for ourselves. The tendency now is toward a two-sidedness which is embedded in every aspect of our lives. Our language poses questions by making us choose between opposites. The imperialist creates the anti-imperialist. Before "cool" there was hot and cold. "Cool" was the first attempt to break out of the two-sidedness. Two-sidedness always minimizes the dimensions of struggle by narrowly defining the situation. We end up with a one dimensional view of the enemy and of ourselves.

Learn to be shrewd. Our first impulse is always to define *our* position. Why do we feel the need to tell them? We create space by not appearing to be what we really are.

Shrewdness is not simply a defensive tactic. The essence of shrewdness is learning to take advantage of the enemy's weaknesses. Otherwise you can never win. The rule is: be honest among yourselves, but deceive the enemy.

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Today, the mode of struggle requires a durable and resilient form of organization which will enable us to cope both with the attrition of daily life and the likelihood of repression. Unless we can begin to solve problems at this level collectively, we are certainly not fit to create a new society. Contrary to what people are led to think, i.e. united we stand, united we fall, it will be harder to destroy a multitude of collectives than the largest organizations with centralized control.

The limitation on size raises a difficult problem. What do you say to someone who asks, "Can I join your collective?" This question is ultimately at the root of much hostility (often unconscious) toward the collective form of organization. You can't separate size from the collective because it must be small in order to exist. The collective has a right to exclude individuals because it offers them the alternative of starting a new collective, i.e. sharing the responsibility for organization. This is the basic answer

Size is a key to security. But its real importance lies in the fact that the collective reproduces new social relations-the advantage being that the process can begin now.

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longer be the framework of discipline. It must be based on political understanding. One of the functions of analysis is that it be applied internally.

Preparation is another part of the process which creates continuity between meetings and insures that our own thinking does not become a part-time activity. It also combats the tendency to talk off the top of one's head and to pick ideas out of the air. Whenever meetings tend to be abstract and random it means the ideas put forward are not connected by thought (i.e. analysis). There is seldom serious investigation behind what is being said.

What does it mean to prepare for a meeting? It means not coming empty-handed or empty-headed. Mao says, "No investigation, no right to speak." Assuming a group has decided what it wants to do, the first step is for everyone to investigate. This means taking the time to actually look into the matter, sort out the relevant materials and be able to make them accessible to everyone in the collective. The motive underlying all preparation should be the construction of a coherent analysis. "We must substitute the sweat of self-criticism for the tears of crocodiles," according to a new Chinese proverb.

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headlines with prestype. Cut up your favorite magazine and put it together again. Cut big words in half and make little words out of them-like

ENVIRON MENTAL CRISIS

All you need is a good pair of scissors and rubber cement. Abuse the enemy's images. Turn the Man from Glad into a Frankenstein. Make comic strips out of great art. *Don't let anything interfere with your pleasure.*

Don't read any more books-at least not straight through. As G. B. Kay from Blackpool once said (quoting somebody else), "Reading rots the mind." Pamphlets are so much more fun. Read randomly, write on the margins and go back to comics. You might try the *Silver Surfer* for a start.

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sure-oriented activities. To the working class, automation means a loss of their job-preoccupation with unemployment which is the opposite of leisure. For the excluded, automation doesn't mean anything because it will not be applied to their forms of work.

The automation of the working class has become the ideology of post-scarcity radicals-from the anarchists at *Anarchos* to *SDS*'s new working class. Technological change has rescued them from the dilemma of a class analysis they were never able to make. With the elimination of class struggle by automation (the automation of the working class) the radicals have become advocates of leisure society and touristic lifestyles.

This anti-work attitude leads to a utopian outlook and removes us from the realm of history. It prevents the construction of collectivity and self-activity. The issue of how to transform work into self-activity is central to the elimination of class and the reorganization of society.

Self-activity is the reconstruction of the consciousness (wholeness) of one's individual life activity. The collective is what makes the reconstruction possible because it defines individuality not as a private experience but as a

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TODAY

I WAS SO UNCOMFORTABLE

GETTING HOME DIDN'T FIX IT

EVERYTHING I TOUCHED TURNED TO SHIT

I SPILLED THINGS,

SPILLED COFFEE IN THE EGGS

SPILLED EGG POWDER ON THE RUG

THINGS DIDN'T WORK RIGHT,

FRUSTRATING EVERYTHING

PLAYED MY GUITAR,

COULD NOT FIND MY GUITAR PICK

AND FINGERS STARTED HURTING

TODAY ALL SORTS OF THINGS

FRUSTRATED ME

TONIGHT I AM SO HARD UP

FOR SOMETHING TO BE NICE

TONIGHT I COULD FEEL

VERY DEMANDING.

I

TENSION

THE PHONE IS RINGING OFF THE WALL

AND YOU

AND I

DEFY EACH OTHER TO ANSWER IT.

There are already a number of gatherings which appear to involve contact but in reality are grotesque facsimilis. The worst of these and the one most people flock to is the conference. This is a hotel of the mind which turns us all into tourists and spectators. A lower form of existence is the endless meeting-the one that is held *every* night. Not to mention the committees formed expressly to arrange the meetings.

The basic principle of contact between collectives is: you only meet when you have something to say to each other. This means two things. First, that you have a concrete idea of what it is you want to say. Secondly, that you must prepare it in advance. These principles help to insure that communication does not become an administrative problem.

The new forms of contact have yet to be created. We can think of two simple examples. A member of one collective can attend the meeting of another collective or there may be a joint meeting of the groups as a whole. The first of these appears to be the most practical, however, the drawback is that not everyone is involved. There are undoubtedly other forms of contact which are likely to develop. The main thing is to invent them.

the need for new formats

The need for new formats grows out of the oppressiveness of print. We must learn the techniques of advertisement. They consist of short, clean, non-rhetorical statements. The ad represents a break with the college education and the diarrhea of words. The ad is a concentrated formula for communication. Its information power has already outmoded the school system. The secret is to gain as much pleasure in creating the form as in expressing the idea.

priority of local action

The collective gives priority to local action. It rejects the mass politics of the white nationalists with their national committees, organizers and the superstars. Definitely, the collective is out of the mainstream and what's more it feels no regrets. The aim of a collective is to feel new thoughts and act new ideas-in a word to create its own space. And that, more than any program, is what is intolerable to all the xerox radicals trying to reproduce their own images.

The collective is the hindquarters of the revolution. It makes no pretence whatsoever in regard to the role of vanguard. Expect nothing from them. They are not your leaders. Leave them alone. The collective knows it will be the last to enter the new world.

How can we prevent local action from becoming provincial? Whether or not it does so depends on our overall strategy. Provincialism is simply the consequence of not knowing what is happening. A commune, for example, is provincial because its strategy is based on petty farming and the glorification of the extended family. What they have is astrology, not a strategy.

Local action should be based on the global structure of modern society. There can be no collective action without collectives. But the creation of a collective should not be mistaken for victory nor should it become an end in itself. The great danger the collective faces historically is that of being cut off(or cutting itself off) from the outside world. The issue ultimately will be what action to take and when. Whether collectives become a social force depends on their analysis of history and their course of action.

In fact, the "provinces" today are moving ahead of the centers in political consciousness and motivation. From Minnesota to the Mekong Delta the revolt is gaining coherence. The centers are try-

production of the mind. But just because ideas have become so mechanical does not mean we should abandon thought.

Most people are not willing to face the fact that they are living in a society that has yet to be explained. Any attempt to probe those areas which are unfamiliar is met with a general hostility or fear. People seem afraid to look at themselves analytically. Part of the problem of not knowing what to do reveals itself in our not knowing who we are the motivation to look at yourself critically and to explain society comes from the desire to change *both*. The heart of the problem is that we do not concretely imagine winning, except perhaps, by accident.

Analysis is the arming of the brain. We're being stifled by those who tell us analysis is intellectual when in reality it is a tool of the imagination. Just as you can't tolerate intellectualism, so you cannot act from raw angernot if you want to win. You must teach your stomach how to think and your brain how to feel. Analysis should help us to express anger intelligently. Learning to think, i.e. analysis, is the first step toward conscious activity.

How do we defend adopting the style of advertising when its function is so oppressive? As a medium we think that it represents a revolutionary mode of production. Rejecting it has resulted in the stagnation of our minds and a crude romanticism in political culture. Those who turn up their noses at ads think in a language that is decrepid. Using the ad technique transforms the person who does it. It makes writing a pleasure for anyone because it strives for orality in print.

What we mean by the use of ad technique is to physically use it. Most of the time we are unconscious of ads and, if we do become conscious, we still don't act upon them-don't subvert them. Ads are based on repetition. If you affect one of them, you affect them all. Know the environment of the ad. The most effective way to subvert an ad is to make the contradiction in it visible. Advertize it. The vulnerability of ads lies in the possibility of turning them against the exploiters.

Jerry Rubin says you should use the media all the time. At least he goes all the way. This is better than the

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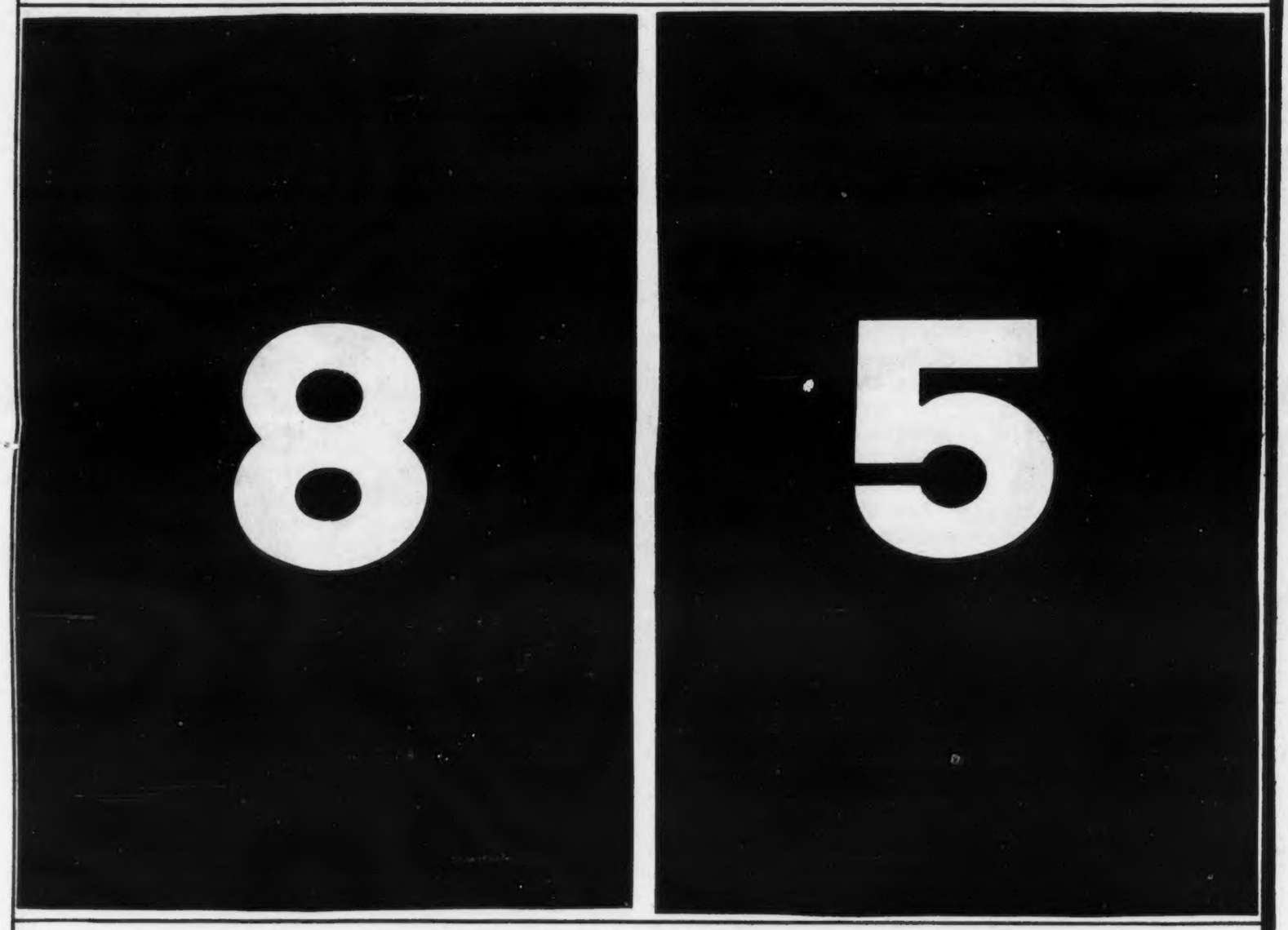
You find people setting up administrative functions to deal with information flows before they have any idea what they want to say. The collective is not obsessed with "communicating" or "relating" to the movement. What concerns it is the amount of noise-incessant phone calls, form letters, announcements of meetings, etc-that passes for communication. It is time we gave more thought to what we say and how we say it.

What exactly do we mean by contact? We want to begin by taking the bureaucracy out of communication. The idea is to begin modestly. Contact is touching on all sides. The essential thing about it is directness and reliability. Eyeball to eyeball.

Other forms of communication-telephone, letters, documents, etc.-should never be used as *substitutes* for direct contact. In fact, they should serve primarily to prepare contacts.

Why is it so important to have direct contact? Because it is the simplest form of communication. Moreover, it is physical and involves all the senses-most of all the sense of smell. For this reason it is reliable. It also takes account of the real need for security. Those who talk about repression continue to pass around sheets of paper asking for names, addresses and telephone numbers.

19



So no doubt you feel yourself tightening up because you think it sounds heavy. Really, the problem is that you think much bigger than you act. Be modest. Start with what you already know and want to know more about. Analysis begins with what interests you. Political thinking should be part of everyday life, not a class privilege. To be practical analysis must give you an understanding of what to do and how to do it.

Thinking should help to distinguish between what is important and what is not. It should break down complex forces so that we can understand them. Break everything down. In the process of analyzing something you will discover that there are different ways of acting which were not apparent when you began. This is the pleasure of analysis. To investigate a problem is to begin to solve it.

34

The doubts people have about local action reveal how dependent they are on the glamour of mass politics. Everyone wants to project themselves on the screen of revolution-as Yippies or White Panthers. Having internalized the mass, they ask themselves questions whose answers seem logical in its context. How can we accomplish anything without mass action? If we don't go to meetings and demonstrations, will we be forgotten? Who will take us seriously if we don't join the rank and file?

Slowly you realize that you have become a spectator, an object. Your politics take place on a stage and your social relations consist of sitting in an audience or marching in a crowd. The fragmentation of your everyday experience contrasts with the spectacular unity of the mass.

By contrast, the priority of local action is an attempt to unify everyday life and fragment the mass. This level of consciousness is a result of rejecting the laws of mass behavior based on Leninism and TV ideology. It makes possible an enema of the brain which everyone so desperately needs. You will be relieved to discover that you can create a situation by localizing your struggle.

23

I used to say
my mother's hands
were like a man's.
But to tell the truth
I haven't seen a man's
with skin so coarse
and cracks and cuts
so deep that washing
doesn't touch the permanent dirt.

My mother
liked work.
She could throw
her weight into
pushing her car
rather than repairing it,
lifting her grown children
off the ground
to greet them
rather than kissing them,
tearing rags
rather than sewing patches.

She wanted me and the boys
to fight our own battles,
and if you called
for her interference
she would claim indifference
unless blood was drawn.

She was not affectionate.

She never aroused in me
a false emotion,
but she taught me things
about blood and love and sorrow
that will not go away.

She and I have left
almost everything unsaid,
and now there is nothing to say:
no recriminations, no protestations,
no silliness of any kind.

We have declared
peace from exhaustion.

Lago

PAPER WOMAN

(for Angela Davis)

Paper woman
face bigger than life
collar frayed
lips open to give the bad news

pulp into person

have coffee with me and
fill the room with cigarette smoke.
Take off your wire rims and
let me kiss away your failing vision.

Paper woman
we need more than these
fragments of your myth.
Come back to us screaming
so no ear can ever again be stopped against you.
Come back with your vision and health restored.
Come back nicotine free.
Come back the size of life
lips open to give the better-than-life-news,

"Home free all."

Iago

OUR PRINTING POLICY

The AIAW collective makes all decisions on what we print. We try to print articles that we agree with, and as a whole, have the paper represent the politics of the collective. We do, however, decide at times to print material submitted to us that we may have some disagreements with, but that we basically think are helpful and worth reading. We do not edit any articles, but sometimes we don't feel right about printing certain articles without commenting or responding to them in the paper to make our own views clear. If we wish to do that we will communicate privately with whoever submitted it to be sure it's all right. To designate what articles come from outside, we have started signing AIAW on collective articles and articles by individuals from the collective.

People keep writing us nice letters and we want to print them. It would save us a lot of time if you would indicate whether or not you want us to print it. We never use anyone's name unless we know she wants us to.

-AIAW?

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the function of analysis

Not only can there be no revolution without revolutionary theory, there can be no strategy without an analysis. Strategy is knowing ahead of time what you are going to do. This is what analysis makes possible. When you begin, you may not know anything. The purpose of analysis is not to know everything, but to know what you do know and know it good-that is collectively. The heart of thinking analytically is to learn over and over again that the process is as important as the product. Developing an analysis requires new ways of thinking. Without new ways of thinking we are doomed to old ways of acting.

The question of what are we going to do is the hardest to answer and the one that ultimately will determine whether a collective will continue to exist. The difficulty of the question makes analysis all the more necessary. We can no longer afford to be propelled by the crudest forms of advertisement-slogans and rhetoric. The function of analysis is to reveal a plan of action.

You will be accused of factionalism. Don't waste time thinking about this age old problem. A collective is not a faction. Responding to Pavlov's bell puts you in the position of a salivating dog. There will be no end to your hunger when who you are is determined by someone else.

You will also be accused of elitism. This is tricky business and should not be dismissed lightly. A collective must first know what is meant by elitism. Instead of wondering whether it refers to leadership or personalities, you should first anchor the issue in a class context. Know where your ideas come from and what their relation is to the dominant ideology. You should ask the same questions about those who make the accusations. What is their class background and class interest? So far many people have reacted defensively to the charge of elitism and, thus, have avoided dealing with the issue head on. That in itself is a class reaction.

The internal is a mirror of the external. The best way to avoid behaving like an elite is to prevent the formation of elitism within the collective itself. Often when charges of elitism are true, they reflect the same class relations internally.

The ways of undermining the autonomy of a collective are many and insidious. The call for unity can no longer be responded to automatically. The time has come to question the motives and effectiveness of such actions-and to feel good (i.e. correct) in doing so. Jargon is pidgeon talk and is meant to make us feel stupid and powerless. Because collective action is not organized as a mass, it does not have to rely on the call of unity in order to act.

Does "one divide into two" or "two fuse into one"? This question is a subject of debate in China and now here. This debate is a struggle between two conceptions of the world. One believes in struggle, the other in unity. The two sides have drawn a clear line between them and their arguments are diametrically opposed. Thus, you can see why one divides into two.

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September 21, 1964

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AIN'T I A WOMAN? IS A PUBLICATION REFLECTING ONLY THE OPINION AND STRUGGLE OF A SMALL COLLECTIVE OF RADICAL GAY WOMEN- NOT THE WHOLE GAY/WOMEN'S COMMUNITY IN IOWA CITY.

Why is there relatively little practical analysis of what is happening today? Some people refuse to analyze anything which they cannot immediately comprehend. Basically they have a feeling of inadequacy. This is partly because they have never had the opportunity to do it before and, therefore, don't know they're capable of it. On the other hand, many activists put down analysis as being "intellectual"-which is more a commentary on their own kind of thinking than anything else. Finally, there are those who feel no need to think and become very uncomfortable when somebody does want to. This often reflects their class disposition. The general constipation of the movement is a product of all these forces.

One reason for this sad state of affairs is that analysis gives so little satisfaction. This is another way of saying that it is not practical. What has happened to all thinking can best be seen in the degeneration of class analysis into stereotyped, obese definitions. There is little difference between the theory-mongers of high abstraction and the sloganeers of crude abstraction. Theory is becoming the dialect of robots, and slogans the mass

ing to decipher what is happening, to catch up and contain it. For this purpose they must create centralized forms of organization-or "coordination" as the modernists call it.

The first principle of local action is to denationalize your thinking. Take the country out of *Salem*. Get out of *Marlborough* country. Become conscious of how your life is managed from the national centers. Lifestyles are roles designed to give you the illusion of movement while keeping you in your place. "Style is mass chasing class, and class escaping mass."*

Local action gives you the initiative by enabling you to define the situation. That is the practice of knowing you are the subject. Marat says: "The important thing is to pull yourself up by your own hair, to turn yourself inside out and see the whole world with fresh eyes." The collective turns itself inside out and sees reality.

* W. Rauschenbush, "The Idiot God Fashion," *Woman's Coming of Age*, eds. Schmalhausen and Calverton, 1931.

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published by the Furies Collective — P.O. Box 8893 S.E. Station, Wash. D.C. 20003 (202) 544-3140

This publication is on file at the International Women's History Archive, 2325 Oak Street Berkeley, Calif. 94708, and is available on microfilm through Bell & Howell, Drawer "E" Wooster, Ohio.

7

the dream of unity

The principle of unity is based on the proposition that everyone is a unit (a fragment). Unity means 1 Multiplied by itself. We are going to say it straight-in so far as unity has suppressed real political differences-class, racial, sexual-it is a form of tyranny. The dream of unity is in reality a nightmare of compromise and suppressed desires. We are *not* equal and unity perpetuates inequality.

The collective will be subject constantly to pressure from outside groups demanding support in one form or another. Everyone is always in a crisis. Given these circumstances, a group can have the illusion of being permanently mobilized and active without ever having a politics of its own. Calls for unity channel the political energies of collectives into *support* politics. So, as a precaution, the collective must take time to work out its own politics and plan of action. Above all, it should try to foresee crisis situations and their "rent-a-crowd" militancy

Ain't I A Woman?

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NAME Anybody who thinks AIAW puts lipsticks on their cover is dead wrong! We use gun powder — not face powder!